

WALL STREET REFORM AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

(Mr. HEINRICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. Speaker, when I took office back in January, the economy was on the verge of collapse. We've taken some tough votes this year to promote a strong economic recovery, and we're beginning to see some signs that the economy is turning around. But to avoid this sort of economic crisis from happening again, we need to rein in the Wall Street banks that brought us to this point and begin to make Washington more responsible.

The Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act will prevent risky dealings by Wall Street and begin an end to the days of taxpayer-funded bailouts. At the same time, this bill ensures that small banks and credit unions, which play a key role in their communities, are not subject to undue regulatory burdens.

We must bring an end to the era of irresponsible and recklessness on Wall Street. Our country's working families, our small businesses are playing by the rules. It's time that Wall Street must learn to do the same.

I would urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

WALL STREET REFORM AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

(Mr. HALL of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1473, the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. To help Main Street, we must reform the way Wall Street has done business and end the risky practices that have caused millions of Americans to lose their jobs, their homes, and life savings.

This legislation will protect American consumers and prevent the irresponsible behaviors and practices that caused the financial crisis last fall. H.R. 1473 restores responsibility and accountability on Wall Street through tough rules and regulations of risky practices. It protects consumers on Main Street by ensuring that bank loans, mortgages, and credit cards are fair and transparent. It also ensures that taxpayers will never again need to bail out Wall Street banks by ensuring the "too big to fail" firms don't have a stranglehold on the market.

These firms' practices led us to the brink of disaster last fall, and we cannot allow them to threaten our economy again with dangerous behavior. H.R. 1473 reforms these practices, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE TREATY IS NEEDED

(Mr. TONKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the 15th United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, that is currently underway.

First, Mr. Speaker, I wholly reject false notions and political attacks attempting to destroy sound science and evidence. This issue, from its environmental to its energy and economic impacts, is too important for false political attacks and deceitful op-eds and letters to the editor.

The Copenhagen discussions are about responsible governments coming together to negotiate an international climate treaty to better our environmental and energy outcomes, not to mention creating a fair marketplace in which the world's economies will indeed compete.

There is a global race today, a race for a clean energy economy, the outcome of which will allow the winner to export clean energy intellect and expertise. Other countries are passing us by in this race. Like the space race of decades ago, we must come together as a Nation bound by the common goals of reducing global emissions, bettering our energy outcome, and enhancing our economy. The future of our Nation depends on us.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3288, CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 961 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 961

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 3288) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes. The conference report shall be considered as read. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the conference report to its adoption without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate; and (2) one motion to recommit.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I will raise a point of order against H. Res. 961 because the resolution violates section 426(a) of the Congressional Budget Act. The resolution carries a waiver of all points of order against consideration of the conference report, which includes a waiver of section 425 of the Congressional Budget Act which causes a violation of section 426(a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arizona makes a point of order that the resolution violates Section 426(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The gentleman has met the threshold burden under the rule. The gentleman from Arizona and a Member opposed each will control 10 minutes of debate on the question of consideration. After that debate, the Chair will put the question of consideration.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I raise this point of order not so much out of a concern for unfunded mandates, but again, it's about the only opportunity we have to stand up and talk about the process by which this conference report is being brought to the floor.

We all remember that earlier this year we had something unprecedented happen. We have never in the history of the Republic ever had every appropriation bill come to the floor under a closed rule where Members from both sides of the aisle were denied the ability to offer amendments.

Now, until a decade or two ago, appropriation bills typically came to the floor without even going through the Rules Committee at all. It would simply come under an open rule, and amendments would be disposed of on the floor and there would be open debate.

A couple of decades ago, we started to go to the Rules Committee, but only to set overall parameters. It was still an open rule, and any Member could offer any amendment to strike funding or move funding around within the bill as long as it was germane. But this year we were told by the majority that we had to rush this legislation through, these appropriation bills.

Remember, the main reason Congress is here is because of the power of the purse. It's article 1: to dispose of funding legislation, to fund the agencies of the Federal Government. So that is the important reason we're here.

But we were told we had to rush that through and had to do it under what amounts to a form of legislative martial law where every appropriation bill this year, every one, came to the floor under a closed rule. Members were denied the ability to offer the amendments they wanted to offer. They could only offer the amendments that the Rules Committee saw fit for them to offer.

Over 1,000 amendments were offered. Just 12 percent of those amendments were actually allowed onto the House floor. Now, I was fortunate to have a number of those amendments allowed. Some of my colleagues came to the floor or came to the Rules Committee over and over again with multiple amendment requests on every bill, and in the entire year, not allowed one, not one amendment. We had several members not allowed one amendment the entire year because we had to rush these bills through for some unknown reason. We were told that we had to do this because we wanted to avoid an omnibus.

Well, here we are with an omnibus. This is a bill that spends north of a